

Because of the Federal Shutdown, Delaware and All Other States Will Issue February Food Benefits on or Before Jan. 20

NEW CASTLE (Jan. 14, 2019) – Because of the partial federal government shutdown, Delaware will join other states in issuing food benefits early for February, loading them onto clients' Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards on or before Jan. 20.

The more than 136,000 Delawareans who are clients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive their February benefits by Sunday, Jan. 20, said Ray Fitzgerald, director of the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Social Services (DSS), which manages the food benefit program in



Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program

Delaware. DSS typically staggers food benefits between the second and the 22nd days of the month.

“To be clear, these early food benefits are not additional or bonus benefits,” said Dr. Kara Odom Walker, DHSS Cabinet Secretary. “Because clients will have two months’ worth of food dollars on their EBT cards this month, we urge them to plan and budget wisely. It is important for them to use January benefits in January, and February’s benefits in February. Our hope is to be back on the regular schedule beginning in March.”

Clients will be notified of the early issuance through letters to each household, contacts through retail outlets and community partners, social media posts, and other means.

Fitzgerald said DSS is working with grocery and convenience stores to alert them of the early issuance of February benefits so they can stock additional food items and increase staffing as needed. The division also is working to get out the message to community partners, including legislators, State Service Centers, the Food Bank of Delaware, senior centers, places of worship and other organizations.

The average household benefit in Delaware is \$238 per month, which makes the total disbursement about \$15.8 million monthly. The majority of SNAP clients are children, seniors and people with disabilities.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said it is able to make the payments for February based on a provision in the short-term continuing resolution that kept several federal agencies funded through Dec. 21.

Clients in Delaware who have questions about the balances on their EBT cards can check them online at [ConnectEBT.com](https://connectebt.com) or call Conduent Customer S

ervice at 1-800-526-9099.